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ABSTRACT

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Running head: COUNSELOR'S ACCULTURATION AND CLIENT'S EXPECTATION

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Perceived Counselor Acculturation Levels:

Their Pertinence to Caucasian Client Expectations

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Abstract

After reading 1 of 4 randomly assigned written description of a counselor, a group of 257 Caucasian undergraduates completed the Expectations About Counseling: Brief Form (Tinsley, 1982), Confidence Rating scales and Willingness items to examine how the perceived levels of acculturation of the counselor influenced client's perceptions of the counselor and the counseling processes. The main hypothesis was that Caucasian client's expectations would be influenced by the perceived Asian counselor's level of acculturation. The results indicated that participants were less confident in interpersonal concerns and less willing to work with or recommend the low-acculturated Asian counselor. The results also demonstrated that participants' gender differences influenced their expectations and confidence for counseling. Research and counseling implications are discussed.

Perceived Counselor Acculturation Levels:

Their Pertinence to Caucasian Client Expectations

Multicultural counseling has become a crucial issue during last two decades and has been identified as the "fourth force" in the fields of counseling psychology (Lee, 1991; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000; Watkins, 1983). Counseling psychology has been attentive to the need for multicultural counseling competence (i.e., counselor's knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, and sensitivity) to diversity issues (i.e., ethnic, gender, age, social class, sexual orientation) in providing services to various cultural groups (Constantine & Ladany, 2000; Pedersen, 1997; Sue et al., 1998). Discussions of cultural diversity in counseling have focused on assessment and racial identity development (Helms & Cook, 1999; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000), client characteristics (Sue & Sundberg, 1996; Tata & Leong, 1994), clients' perceptions of counseling expectations services (Abreu, 2000; Kunkel, 1990; Lee & Mixson, 1995; Thompson & Jenal 1994; Trimble, Fleming, Beauvais, & Jumper-Thurman, 1996), counselor characteristics (Atkinson, Wampold, Lowe, Matthews, & Ahn, 1998; Henderson & Lyddon, 1997), and the influence of acculturation in approaching the culturally different in counseling settings (Fischer, Jome, & Atkinson, 1998; Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993; Ridley, Li, & Hill, 1998). However, while quantitative research, using measures to assess multicultural counseling issues, has been a topic of some interest, Ponterotto (1998) noted that general knowledge in this area is still limited, especially for culturally different counselors' acculturation levels (e.g. Abreu, 2000).

General Expectations

Client expectations about counseling play an important role in the counseling process and have been frequent topic of investigation in the field of counseling psychology (Abreu, 2000; Tinsley & Westcot, 1990). Social learning theory holds that learning is a function of the

reinforcement of the person's expectations about particular events (Bandura, 1977). Because expectations are learned, modified, and updated through repeated interactions with others and environments, an individual's cultural background forms a context for shaping his or her behaviors, values, allegiances, and expectations. Counseling is a one-on-one social learning relationship. Both counselors and clients enter the relationship with expectations that are shaped by the cultural context of their origins and initial data they have concerning each other. Expectations that clients commencing counseling hold for their counselor's behaviors may promote or hinder the therapeutic effectiveness (Frank, 1968; Goldstein, Heller, & Sechrest, 1966; Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; Yanico & Hardin, 1985). Thus, it is generally accepted that clients' expectations greatly impact on their decisions to enter into and stay in counseling, and that their expectations influence the counseling effectiveness and working alliances (Tinsley, Bowman, & Ray, 1988).

Minority's Expectations

Research on expectations about the counseling process among ethnic minority groups has also examined the relationship between expectations about counseling and help-seeking behavior. For example, Kenny (1994) found that Asian American and African American students had lower expectations of personal commitment to the counseling process when compared to their Caucasian American peers because of some cultural heritages, images and stereotypes of help-seeking behaviors. In a cross-cultural comparison, Yuan and Tinsley (1981) found that Caucasian American students expected counselors to be less directive and protective than did African, Chinese, and Iranian students who expected counselors to be more directive authority figures. Abreu (2000) reported that Mexican American students also held higher expectations regarding the counselor and the counseling process when the counselor is Mexican American

rather than Caucasian American. Based on the cited literature, similarity between counselors' and clients' cultural values and experiences would be expected to foster greater client disclosures and more positive client expectations for the counseling process and outcome.

Effects of Matching

Several variables regarding match or similarity of counselor-client characteristics (i.e., age, gender role/identity) have been discussed in the use of counseling and other mental health services (Ametrano & Pappas, 1996; Hays, 1996; Robiner & Storandt, 1983). The most frequently studied variables are related to the ethnic or racial similarity between the counselor and the clients within the ethnic minority populations (Atkinson et al., 1998; Coleman, Wampold, & Casali, 1995). For example, empirical studies demonstrated that when given a choice, ethnic minority individuals in the United States prefer ethnically similar counselors to Caucasian counselors (e.g., Abreu, 2000; Lopez, Lopez, & Fong, 1991; Lu, 1996). Lin (1994) found that ethnic and language match appeared to be related to counseling process and outcome and seemed especially important among immigrant populations. However, Sue and Sundberg (1996) pointed out that several research findings regarding client-counselor differences present a mixed picture. For instance, Atkinson (1983) and Sue (1988) found evidence that African American clients prefer an African American counselor, but uncovered little support for preference of an ethnically similar counselor among American Indians, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Atkinson, Furlong, and Williams (1986) found the five most preferred counselor characteristics were ordered as follows: (a) more education, (b) similar attitudes and values, (c) higher age, (d) similar personality, and (e) the same ethnicity. Hence, Sue and Sundberg (1996) suggested that even more important than an ethnic match was the display of cultural sensitivity or attitudes of the counselor toward the different acculturation levels of

clients.

Acculturation

"Acculturation" is defined as a process of adopting the cultural traits or social patterns of another group, especially the dominant one in a society (Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1992). Suinn, Khoo, and Ahuna (1995) pointed out that when two or more cultures come into contact, two likely results of the process of acculturation are assimilation and multiculturalism. Assimilation results in the dominant culture absorbing and losing or abandoning much of an immigrant's indigenous heritage; and multiculturalism ideally leads to both or all cultures existing side by side in integrated harmony. Within the context of American society, acculturation refers to the degree to which an individual from another cultural context identifies with the attitudes, behaviors, and values of middle-class Americans of European descents (Lee, 1991). Acculturation issues become increasingly paramount as clients and counselors of diverse cultural backgrounds interface with each other with growing frequency. Within-group differences regarding levels of acculturation and/or stage of racial identity may differentiate one's personality, attitudes, values, and behaviors in the dominant culture. For example, Abe and Zane (1990) showed that foreign-born Asian Americans were significantly more other-directed, and less extraverted, than were native-born Caucasians. However, American-born Asians fell between both groups on levels of other-directedness and extroversion. The results suggested that immigrants' offspring likely experience increased acculturation (i.e., absorption of the host culture's values). Leong and Tata (1990) found that highly acculturated Chinese American children value self-actualization more than less acculturated children. Gomez and Fassinger (1994) also indicated that acculturation was related to achievement style among Latinos. They found that Latinos who were more acculturated to the Caucasian culture were more

competitive and sociable, and preferred to use power to achieve their goals. Accordingly, they suggested that the more bicultural the individuals, the wider their repertoire of achieving style (i.e., competitiveness, sociability, power).

Acculturation also seems to influence perceptions of and expectations for counseling among ethnic minority groups. Bennett and Bigfoot-Sipes (1991) found that similar ethnicity became more important to Native American than to Caucasian students, especially those with a higher sense of commitment to the Native American culture. Atkinson and Gim (1989) indicated that regardless of ethnicity and gender, the most acculturated students were (a) most likely to recognize their personal need for professional psychological help, (b) most tolerant of the stigma associated with psychological help, and (c) most open to discuss their problems with a psychologist. On the other hand, several studies have demonstrated an inverse relationship between degree of acculturation and willingness to seek counseling (Gim, Atkinson, & Whiteley, 1990; Solberg, Choi, Ritsma, & Jolly, 1994). Gim et al. (1990) found that low-acculturated Asian American students rated their problems as more severe and expressed greater willingness to see a counselor than did their higher-acculturated counterparts. Solberg et al. (1994) noted that less acculturated Asian American college students were generally more likely to seek help than their highly acculturated counterparts. In addition, some studies found that the levels of acculturation were not significantly related to help-seeking behaviors or perceptions of counseling (Atkinson, Lowe, & Matthews, 1995). Atkinson et al. (1995) found that the interaction between participants' levels of acculturation and type of problem did not significantly influence their willingness to seek counseling, nor did their levels of acculturation have a direct effect on willingness to seek counseling. Hess and Street (1991) reported that levels of acculturation among Mexican American high school students were not related to preference for counselor ethnicity. In short,

inconsistent findings about the relationship between levels of acculturation among ethnically different groups and their help-seeking behaviors in mental health services leave questions for further exploration. Hypothetically, participants low in adherence to traditional Asian cultural values and behaviors (highly acculturated) are more willing to seek mental health services. On the contrary, Gim et al.'s (1990) and Solberg et al.'s (1994) findings demonstrated an inverse relationship between acculturation and help-seeking behavior may exist because less acculturated participants experience more psychological stressors (e.g., conflict between the Asian and American cultures, language fluency) than their highly acculturated counterparts. It can be argued that less acculturated participants experience a greater degree of conflict between two or more cultures, whereas the highly acculturated individuals generally have adopted the values, norms, and lifestyle of the majority culture and therefore may not experience as much conflict.

Client Gender Differences in Counseling

Because of varying socialization experiences of males and females, gender difference may evolve some stereotypic biases or various patterns of coping strategies between sexes. For example, as a general rule males are reluctant to reveal their inner negative feelings because it might make them look weak and powerless (Sung, 1987). Gender difference might also relate to clients' perceptions of counseling and their willingness to seek counseling. Sue and Sundberg (1996) pointed out that females respond more positively than males to counseling, for example, women were more receptive to microskills such as the reflection of feeling and paraphrasing than men. Cherbosque (1987) indicated that female clients expected to reveal more about themselves to their counselor, compared to male counterparts. Kunkel (1990) found that female had higher expectations than did men for motivation in counseling, counselor acceptance and genuineness, and for immediacy in the counseling process. Several studies found that females in general were

more willing to seek counseling than were males in general (Good, Dell, & Mintz, 1989; Snell, Hamptom, & McManus, 1992).

Purpose and Hypothesis

The multicultural counseling literature regarding mixed cultural counseling dyads consists largely of studies focused on the client cultural and demographic characteristics, encouraged mental health providers and counselor trainees to explore their own cultural preconceptions, and increased counselors' sensitivity to culturally different clients. However, such findings leading to training recommendations are not without risk, for such a focus may lure overlooking the influence of counselors' own cultural background on clients' expectations. Breaux and Ryujin (1999) considered that cultural sensitivity often consists of a nonverbal understanding acquired from common experience and that this occurs at both an emotional and a cognitive level.

While it is difficult to make blanket assumptions about cultural composition of counselor/client dyads, pursuing demographic data it seems plausible that typical clients in in-patient and outpatient treatment settings (Cheung & Snowden, 1990; Snowden & Cheung, 1990) and typical counselors (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999) in the U.S. are Caucasians. These considerations directed interests in examining client expectations for counseling from the perspective of Caucasians' perceptions of counselor acculturation. Client variables such as cultural mistrust can modify clients' expectations regarding counselors and counseling (e.g., Watkins, Terrell, Miller, & Terrell, 1989). The main purpose of this research is to examine how the perceived levels of acculturation of Asian counselors to the dominant Caucasian culture influence clients' perceptions and expectations for the counselor and the counseling processes. Participants' gender was also expected to influence counseling

confidences, expectations, and willingness to work with or recommend the counselor to their acquaintances.

Methods

Participants

One hundred twenty-four men and 133 women enrolled in undergraduate psychology courses at a large southwestern university volunteered to participate to earn course research credit. Selection criteria for the final sample included: (a) self-identified Caucasian ethnicity, and (b) American citizenship. The participants had a mean age of 21.37 years (SD = 4.43 years).

Measures

Demographic information. All participants provided information regarding age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship status, and their school year. These items were used to determine whether the completed questionnaire would be relevant given the research selection criteria.

Counselor descriptions. Four written descriptions were developed to describe one Caucasian counselor and three Asian counselors. The descriptions for the Asian counselors described three different levels of acculturation of male counselors: low-acculturated, bicultural, and high-acculturated Asian counselor. The low-acculturated Asian counselor description portrayed a fictional Ph.D. psychologist who was born in Southeast Asia and completed his undergraduate education in his home country. He earned his doctoral degree in the U.S., where he remains and is employed in a counseling center at a major university. He was depicted as bilingual and as especially enjoying opportunities to engage in social, leisure, and cultural activities related to his native heritage. Additionally, it was reported that he annually visited his family of origin in his home country. The bicultural Asian counselor description detailed that both the Ph.D. psychologist and his parents were born, raised and educated in the U.S., although

his grandparents immigrated from Southeast Asia. He completed his doctoral education in the U.S. and is employed in a counseling center at a major university. He was depicted as bilingual and as equally enjoying opportunities to engage in Asian, as well as American, social, leisure, and cultural activities. The high-acculturated Asian counselor description indicated that the Ph.D. Asian American psychologist was a fourth generation immigrant from Southeast Asia. He completed his doctoral education in the U.S. and is employed in a counseling center at a major university. He was depicted as monolingual (English speaking) and as never visiting the country of his cultural heritage. He only engaged in social, leisure, and cultural activities related to the American culture. The fourth description of a male Caucasian counselor described him as a fourth generation immigrant from Europe. He completed his doctoral education in the U.S. and is employed in a counseling center at a major university. He was depicted as monolingual (English speaking) and as never visiting the country of his cultural heritage. He engaged exclusively in social, leisure, and cultural activities related to the American culture. All four descriptions were accompanied by the same randomly selected photograph of either an Asian male (for three Asian descriptions) or Caucasian male (for the Caucasian description), similarly attired with a coat and tie. The statement describing the psychologist's view on counseling (basically an eclectic approach), graduate education, and current employment of the psychologist in all four descriptions were identical.

Two pre-experimental checks were performed to validate the acculturation manipulation (i.e., three Asian counselor descriptions). First, 40 undergraduates read one randomly assigned description and categorized the counselor's acculturation level as: (a) strongly identified with southeast Asia and weakly with the U.S. culture; (b) strongly identified with southeast Asia as well as the U.S. culture; or (c) strongly identified with the U.S. and weakly with southeast Asia

culture. Descriptive analysis indicated that participants accurately categorized their assigned acculturation descriptions 90.0 % ($\chi^2 = 60.51$, $p < .001$) of the time: the low-acculturated Asian counselor description ($n = 13$) 76.9% accuracy, the bicultural Asian counselor description ($n = 14$) 100% accuracy, and the high-acculturated Asian counselor description ($n = 13$) 92.3% accuracy.

The second manipulation check consisted of 20 undergraduates who were randomly assigned to view one of the two photographs (Asian American or Caucasian American) and rated the person on six dimensions with 7-point Likert scales. No differences between the two photographs emerged: likeability ($t(18) = 0.37$, $p = .72$); physical attractiveness ($t(18) = 0.29$, $p = .77$); self-confidence ($t(18) = 0.90$, $p = .38$); trustworthiness ($t(18) = 1.74$, $p = .10$); warmness ($t(18) = 0.21$, $p = .83$); and calmness ($t(18) = 0.76$, $p = .46$).

Expectations About Counseling: Brief Form (EAC-B). The EAC-B is a 66-item scale measuring participants' expectations about counseling in 18 areas (Tinsley, 1982). Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale: 1 = not true and 7 = definitely true. In the present study, the Realism Scale was omitted, resulting in a total of 53 items. Tinsley reported that the internal consistency reliabilities of the scales ranged from .69 to .82 with a median reliability of .77. Two-month test-retest reliability ranged from .47 to .87 with a median of .71. All the scales (except Responsibility) had a minimal test-retest reliability of .60. The construct validity has been developed and reported by Tinsley and Westcot (1990).

Confidence Rating Scales. The participants were asked to rate how much confidence they had that the described counselor would be effective in providing help for 23 problem areas (cf., Lewis, Davis, & Lesmeister, 1983; Schneider, 1985): general anxiety, alcohol problem, shyness, sexual problems, depression, parental conflict, dating difficulties, choosing a career, trouble

sleeping, drug problem, inferiority feelings, test anxiety, difficulty making friends, trouble studying, marriage or relationship problems, lack of assertiveness, homosexuality/lesbianism, unwanted pregnancy, religious conflict, losing grip on reality, eating problem, academic problem, and self-exploration. Each problem area was rated on a 6-point Likert scale: 1 = no confidence and 6 = extreme confidence. To reduce the number of problems and to identify their underlying dimensions, the 23 ratings were factor analyzed. A principal component analysis with a varimax rotation revealed four factors which were named: (a) Intra-personal concerns represented by 8 items (e.g., general anxiety, depression, inferiority feelings, etc.); (b) Somatic concerns consisting of 5 items (e.g., sexual problems, alcohol problem, trouble sleeping, etc.); (c) Interpersonal concerns composed of 6 items (e.g., parental conflict, dating difficulties, marriage or relationship problems, etc.); and (d) Academic/Career concerns including 4 items (e.g., trouble studying, choosing a career, etc.). The factor scores were later used to analyze the data for each area/concern.

Willingness items. Each participant answered two questions regarding their attitudes about consulting the described counselor: (a) I would be willing to seek therapy from the counselor described if I felt the need for counseling, and (b) I would recommend the counselor described to a friend if the friend felt he or she needed counseling. (cf., Atkinson, 1995; Schneider, 1992; Trautt & Bloom, 1982). Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale: 1 = disagree and 7 = agree.

Validity indices. Two post-experimental check items were examined. The first determined whether or not the participants could correctly identify counselor's demographics (i.e., gender, educational background, and his family's place of residence). The second check item assessed whether the participants perceived the counselor's acculturation level as each

description was intended to portray.

Procedures

Three Caucasian research assistants administered the study questionnaire packet and collected the data. A total of 351 participants completed the two parts of questionnaire packet after they were told that their participation was strictly voluntary and that their responses would be kept confidential. Participants were told that they would be reading a brief sketch of a psychologist who worked in a major university counseling center and reporting their impression of the described counselor. Within gender, each participant provided demographic information and read one of the four randomly assigned counselor description. After returning these materials participants completed the EAC-B, Confidence Rating Scale, Willingness items, and post-experimental validity indices. All the questionnaires were examined for the required selection criteria and validity indices. A resultant total of 257 useable questionnaires were run for data analyses in the current study.

Designs

A separate 4 (counselor descriptions) X 2 (participants' gender) MANOVA, with Wilks' Lambda criterion, were performed on the 17 EAC-B scales, the factor scores of four area/concerns on the Confidence Rating Scale, and the Willingness items to determine whether, as hypothesized, differences exist among the perceived levels of acculturation of the described counselor and participants' gender. In addition, descriptive statistics and a Chi-square analysis for Question 82 were conducted to reexamine the validity of the pilot study as to whether participants in the current study would be able to correctly categorize the Asian counselor descriptions in corresponding acculturation levels.

Results

EAC-B Scales

MANOVA results indicated a main effect for gender ($F(1, 249) = 3.52, p < .001$). Subsequent univariate analyses for gender indicated that female participants had higher expectations on motivation, acceptance, trustworthiness, concrete, immediacy and outcome, whereas male participants had higher expectations on directiveness, empathy and self-disclosure (see Table 1). MANOVA results also showed an overall effect for counselor descriptions ($F(3, 249) = 1.74, p = .001$). Subsequent univariate comparisons of the cell means for each of the 17 EAC-B scales across four descriptions indicated that only attractiveness was significant ($F(3, 249) = 3.66, p = .013$, see Table 2). Post hoc analyses using the least-significant difference (LSD) revealed that low-acculturated Asian counselor description ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.57$) was less appealing to participants than the bicultural ($M = 4.99, SD = 0.99$) and high-acculturated Asian counselor descriptions ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.21$). There was no difference between the Caucasian counselor description ($M = 4.71, SD = 1.21$) and any of the Asian counselor descriptions. No interaction effect between counselor descriptions and participants' gender was revealed.

Confidence Rating Scale

A 4 (counselor descriptions) X 2 (participants' gender) MANOVA performed on the confidence levels for the four factors representing the problem areas indicated a main effect for gender ($F(1, 249) = 2.67, p = .033$). Subsequent univariate comparisons for gender indicated that female had less confidence in the counselor's helpfulness for Somatic concerns ($M = -0.13, SD = 1.07$) than did male participants ($M = 0.14, SD = 0.90, F(1, 249) = 5.05, p = .026$, see Table 1). MANOVA results also showed an overall difference for counselor descriptions ($F(3, 249) = 1.95, p = .027$). Subsequent univariate comparisons of the cell means for each of the four area concerns across four descriptions indicated that the area of the Interpersonal concerns was

significant ($F(3, 249) = 3.00$, $p = .031$, see Table 2). The follow-up post hoc analyses using LSD demonstrated that participants had less confidence in the Interpersonal concerns towards the low-acculturated Asian counselor description ($M = -0.31$, $SD = 1.08$) than the bicultural ($M = 0.05$, $SD = 0.93$), high-acculturated Asian counselor ($M = 0.15$, $SD = 0.92$), and Caucasian counselor descriptions ($M = 0.12$, $SD = 1.01$). There is no difference between bicultural Asian counselor, high-acculturated Asian counselor, and Caucasian counselor descriptions. No interaction effects by counselor descriptions and participants' gender emerged.

Willingness Items

MANOVA results indicated an overall effect for gender ($F(1, 249) = 4.51$, $p = .012$). Subsequent univariate comparisons of the cell means for the Willingness items across gender indicated that no difference existed (see Table 1). MANOVA results also showed an overall effect for counselor descriptions ($F(3, 249) = 4.08$, $p = .001$). Subsequent univariate comparisons and post hoc LSD analyses of the cell means for the willingness to see the described counselor indicated that participants would be more significantly willing ($ps < .05$, see Table 2) to see the bicultural Asian counselors ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.47$) than the high-acculturated ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.68$) or low-acculturated Asian counselors ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.87$). Also, they were more willing to see the high-acculturated Asian counselor than the low-acculturated one. The results also revealed that participants would be more willing ($p < .05$) to see a Caucasian counselor ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 1.64$) than the low-acculturated Asian counselor. However, there is no significant difference among the bicultural Asian counselor, high-acculturated Asian counselor, and Caucasian counselors.

For the willingness to recommend one of the four counselors to a friend, the post hoc analyses using LSD revealed that the low-acculturated Asian counselor ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.81$)

would be less recommended ($ps < .05$, see Table 2) by the participants than the bicultural Asian counselor ($M = 5.25$, $SD = 1.31$), high-acculturated Asian counselor ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.67$), or the Caucasian counselors ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.67$). There was no difference among the bicultural Asian counselor, high-acculturated Asian counselor, and the Caucasian counselor.

Validity Indices

In order to examine whether participants correctly categorized the Asian counselor acculturation levels, descriptive statistics and a Chi-square analysis were computed. The results indicated that 183 of 257 participants (only three Asian counselor descriptions) correctly identified their assigned acculturation descriptions 86.3 % ($\chi^2 = 243.17$, $p < .001$) of the time: the low-acculturated Asian counselor description ($n = 62$): 77.4% accuracy, the bicultural Asian counselor description ($n = 61$): 86.9% accuracy, and the high-acculturated Asian counselor description ($n = 60$): 95.0% accuracy. It suggested that the designed counselor descriptions to differentiate levels of acculturation in the pilot study as well as the current study were successfully manipulated.

Discussion

Acculturation Levels

The current findings support the hypothesis that perceived acculturation levels of Asian counselors influence Caucasian clients' expectations for, confidence in, and willingness to seek counseling. The low-acculturated Asian counselor is considered less capable of dealing with the client's interpersonal issues (i.e., dating difficulties). Similar results emerge for the EAC-B Attractiveness scale and the Willingness items. Caucasian participants prefer the more acculturated (bicultural or high-acculturated) Asian counselors, as well as the Caucasian counselor to the low-acculturated Asian counselor. The lack of differences among the bicultural

Asian counselor, high-acculturated Asian counselors, and Caucasian counselor suggests that Caucasian clients would prefer to work with the counselors who share some similarities to Caucasian cultural values. Non-Caucasian counselors who show some minimal similarity with respect to the dominant Caucasian cultural attitudes, values, and allegiances may facilitate the counseling working alliance with Caucasian clients.

Gender Differences

The current research findings also reveal that participant gender differences regarding counseling expectations, confidences, and willingness to work with or recommend counselors. The results indicate that males have more confidence in counselors when discussing their somatic concerns (i.e., drug, sexual problems) as opposed to the female participants who feel less confident regarding these concerns. Given that all the counselors were male, female participants may have felt less comfortable discussing somatic/physical problems with opposite sex counselors. With regard to expectations, male participants anticipate more than females that counselors will provide explanations and directions, share the counselors' own feelings and experiences, as well as understand clients' feelings empathetically. Female participants have greater expectations to like and be liked by the counselors and to enjoy their counseling sessions. Females anticipate their counselors will reciprocate those same feelings and goals in counseling. These differences appear congruent with common gender stereotypes whereby males tend to focus more on problem solving techniques using reason and logic and females attend more to the affective/relational qualities of relationships (i.e., Cherbosque, 1987; Kunkel, 1990; Sung, 1987).

One interesting aspect of this research was the lack of univariate gender difference regarding the Willingness items. Neither gender indicated greater willingness to either see the counselor themselves or to recommend the counselor to acquaintances. One possible reason for

this result is the high statistical correlation between the two scales ($r = .78$, $p < .0001$). This may have ecological validity enabling researchers to administer only one of the scales.

Research Recommendations

The present study points to some areas where further study could expand our knowledge. First, our college student sample findings were significant, but additional studies will be needed to determine the generalizability of these results to the non-college populations. The participants in this analog were not clients seeking counseling; therefore, additional research conducted in clinical and/or counseling settings on populations seeking services would also increase generalizability of the present findings. Second, the investigation only studied the acculturation levels of male counselors with Asian backgrounds. Further research exploring the impact of acculturation of counselors of both genders and counselors of other non-Caucasian backgrounds is needed. Third, the level of acculturation of the participants self-identified as Caucasians is unknown. Previous work on acculturation has focused on acculturation levels of non-Caucasians. This work typically assumes that the majority Caucasian culture is monolithic in nature. Everyday experience suggests the myth of the monolith. Caucasian has been broadly defined as including Mediterranean, Alpine, and Nordic subgroups. Yet one readily observes different traditions, vales, and beliefs in disparate Caucasian cultural groups such as the British, Polish, Irish, Italians, and Greeks. One finds little attention in the acculturation literature given to adequate definition and psychometrically sound assessment of Caucasian acculturation levels. Perhaps having more definitive criteria would allow for understanding cultural differences within the majority Caucasian population as this may impact on the client's perception of non-Caucasian counselors. In addition, one must remain attentive that beside Asian counselors and Caucasian clients there are many other permutations of counselor-client dyads in terms of the

gender and cultural background mix.

Practice Implications

The current research findings illustrate important issues that need to be addressed in preparing more counselors of diverse cultural backgrounds. Our evidence suggests Caucasian clients can be impacted by the extent that Asian counselors identify with Asian culture vs. U.S. culture. The multicultural movement might be remiss and possibly undermine its purposes if it ignores the fact that, in the contemporary era, most of the users of mental health services are of Caucasian background. This has implications for students from other countries and backgrounds who come to the U.S. for their training. For example, trainees with international background may need to be made aware of the impact that overemphasizing their cultural origins and heritage has on Caucasian clients.

The results indicated the level of acculturation does have an impact on Caucasian clients' perceptions towards Asian counselors. The first National Multicultural Conference and Summit (NMCS) on diversification issues noted the importance of the multiculturalism's impact on U.S. society (Sue, Bingham, Porche-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999). An implication in the final report of the NMCS is that psychology needs to increase its initiatives in recruiting and training ethnically diverse counselors. Educating these newly trained diverse counselors regarding the findings of this study may facilitate development of the counseling working alliance.

Cautions

Placing the present results in context would consider some cautions. For example, the findings of no significant differences among the 16 EAC-B factors (except for Attractiveness scale) concerning the four counselors suggest that clients' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Openness, Responsibility) regarding some aspects of counseling processes and outcomes, and

other counselors' characteristics (e.g., Tolerance) may be basically unaffected by the perceived level of acculturation of the counselors. The findings of no differences between the more acculturated (bicultural and high-acculturated) Asian counselors and Caucasian may suggest the counselor's level of acculturation is more critical and complicated than is simply consideration of racial matching in counseling dyads. Further, the findings might have most relevance to service settings (e.g., university counseling centers) where prospective clients have access to biographic sketches of facility staff members. Further research could contribute to our knowledge in the multicultural counseling by addressing these cautions.

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Table 1

Univariate Tests for Four Counselor Descriptions on the Expectations About Counseling (EAC-B), Confidence Scales, and Willingness Items

	L[a]		B[b]		H[c]		C[d]			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	Post Hoc
EAC-B scale										
Motivation	4.62	1.47	4.43	1.24	4.66	1.31	4.70	1.49	0.52	
Openness	4.82	1.38	5.12	1.31	5.31	1.05	4.94	1.29	1.85	
Responsibility	5.66	0.84	5.54	1.00	5.80	0.79	5.74	0.83	1.05	
Acceptance	5.07	1.51	5.02	1.39	5.26	1.07	5.05	1.34	0.43	
Confrontation	5.38	1.15	5.16	1.27	5.38	1.09	5.36	1.11	0.50	
Directiveness	4.48	1.51	4.27	1.47	4.26	1.42	4.35	1.58	0.42	
Empathy	3.87	1.69	4.08	1.69	3.71	1.60	3.87	1.39	0.61	
Genuineness	6.14	1.01	6.10	0.99	6.29	0.96	6.21	0.94	0.46	
Nurturance	5.54	1.12	5.56	1.09	5.69	0.85	5.55	1.16	0.27	
Self-Disclosure	3.88	1.73	4.11	1.80	4.05	1.73	3.51	1.71	1.58	
Attractiveness	4.30	1.57	4.99	0.99	4.81	1.21	4.71	1.21	3.66*	L<B,H
Expertise	5.11	1.47	5.05	1.39	4.99	1.17	5.30	1.22	0.64	
Tolerance	5.13	1.21	5.35	1.14	5.38	0.88	5.39	1.05	0.92	
Trustworthiness	5.72	1.27	5.65	1.11	5.81	0.98	5.48	1.27	0.93	
Concreteness	5.43	1.21	5.30	1.17	5.36	0.97	5.49	1.06	0.36	
Immediacy	4.95	1.10	5.33	0.87	5.14	1.06	5.03	0.90	1.86	
Outcome	5.24	1.27	5.26	1.16	5.35	0.99	5.53	1.16	0.91	

Confidence Scales (factor score)										
Intra-personal Concerns	-0.238	1.05	0.096	0.85	0.079	1.03	0.067	1.05	1.68	
Somatic Concerns	0.173	0.95	0.102	1.12	-0.156	1.04	-0.126	0.85	1.81	
Interpersonal Concerns	-0.312	1.08	0.051	0.93	0.146	0.92	0.121	1.01	3.00*	L<B,H,C
Academic/Career Concerns	0.192	0.93	0.084	0.94	-0.045	1.01	-0.066	1.11	1.13	
Willingness Items										
Seek Help (self)	4.28	1.87	5.51	1.47	4.92	1.68	5.24	1.64	6.14**	L<H<B, L<C
Recommend to a friend	4.08	1.81	5.25	1.31	4.89	1.67	5.22	1.60	7.22**	L<H,B,C

Note. L = low-acculturated Asian counselor description. B = bicultural Asian counselor description. H = high-acculturated Asian counselor description. C = Caucasian counselor description. For the EAC-B scores, 1 = not true and 7 = definitely true. For the Seek Help (self) item, 1 = disagree and 7 = agree. For the Recommend to a friend item, 1 = disagree and 7 = agree.

[a]$n = 65$; [b]$n = 65$; [c]$n = 64$; [d]$n = 63$

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 2

Univariate Tests for Participants' Gender on the Expectations About Counseling (EAC-B), Confidence Scales, and Willingness Items

	Male[a]		Female[b]		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
EAC-B scale					
Motivation	4.25	1.34	4.92	1.34	15.84**
Openness	4.90	1.21	5.19	1.31	3.55
Responsibility	5.60	0.89	5.77	0.84	2.35
Acceptance	4.92	1.22	5.27	1.41	4.51*
Confrontation	5.17	1.56	5.45	1.14	3.69
Directiveness	4.60	1.37	4.09	1.56	7.90**
Empathy	4.13	1.46	3.65	1.68	5.93*
Genuineness	6.08	1.06	6.28	0.88	2.47
Nurturance	5.49	1.02	5.67	1.08	1.95
Self-Disclosure	4.22	1.69	3.58	1.76	8.60**
Attractiveness	4.56	1.23	4.84	1.32	3.36
Expertise	5.07	1.31	5.15	1.33	0.20
Tolerance	5.24	1.00	5.38	1.15	1.15
Trustworthiness	5.49	1.20	5.83	1.11	5.56*
Concreteness	5.24	1.15	5.54	1.03	4.88*
Immediacy	4.97	0.91	5.25	1.05	5.55*
Outcome	5.18	1.15	5.50	1.13	5.16*

Confidence Scales (factor score)					
Intra-personal Concerns	-0.092	0.96	0.086	1.03	2.18
Somatic Concerns	0.142	0.90	-0.133	1.07	5.05*
Interpersonal Concerns	-0.101	1.00	0.094	1.00	2.89
Academic/Career Concerns	-0.018	1.03	0.017	0.98	0.07
Willingness Items					
Seek Help (self)	5.04	1.57	4.93	1.86	0.16
Recommend to a friend	4.70	1.57	5.00	1.75	2.69

Note. For the EAC-B scores, 1 = not true and 7 = definitely true. For the Seek Help (self) item, 1 = disagree and 7 = agree. For the Recommend to a friend item, 1 = disagree and 7 = agree.

[a]$n = 124$; [b]$n = 133$

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.